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368 511 The inmates do not bestow noticeable effort or care on their paltry hut, either in building it or while they are living in it, for it serves but a few hours or days for their most urgent requirements for protection against the inclemency of the weather. One must by no means believe that the Indian strives for coziness or agreeable comfort in his hut. No, it serves merely as a meager cover and at the same time to keep the indispensable fire going. Beyond that, the things that Europeans consider necessary in a dwelling would only mean needless expenditure of energy and an unnecessary burden to the Yamana, for he must constantly carry all his belongings along with him. Indeed, he dare not part with them.

1. The Lack of Permanent Settlements

361 Since there is no other way for the natives of Cape Horn to obtain food except by hunting and gathering, all members of the tribe are divided up into individual families, and as such they go forth to hunt for food. Only occasionally a few band together. This manner of obtaining food prohibits a village settlement with many people.

• 367 511 361 Obtaining food is the chief concern of the man. Distant and sometimes futile journeys are necessary before he approaches rocks on which seals are lying, or reaches cliffs in which cormorants nest, or finds mussel banks where gathering is worthwhile. He always sees himself at the mercy of the arbitrary, eternally restless waves and the constant shifting of winds. Despite the best intentions, despite the greatest exertion and extreme hardship, he cannot guarantee that he will attain his goal, keep on his course, and come back to the place from where his canoe trip started. The inescapable dependence on changing weather, which not infrequently hinders any kind of movement for several days, permits neither an ordered grouping of many people nor plans by the hunters to return to a permanent settlement. Anyone staying behind /368/ to wait for food that others were supposed to bring in would too often find himself exposed to starvation (3).

3. These decisive factors have been overlooked by those European critics who, misconstruing the facts, have judged our natives to be backward

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because they do not build fixed dwellings or permanent settlements.

361 Then, too, closer consideration of the game itself, upon which our Indian is after all dependent, would make the longer sojourn in compact settlements seem inadvisable. The animals change their location quite erratically. If they do favor certain places, they stay there only as long as man does not disturb them. Once they have been frightened away, it may be days before they have regained a feeling of security and settle down there again. Assuming, then, that many families wanted to live together on the same spot, this region would surely be cleared of all game within a wide radius, no matter whether it were killed or frightened away. Accordingly, the hunter would be obliged to venture ever farther from his camp in order to find his prey. Quite apart from his previous exertions, his return would be more difficult and more uncertain; those anxiously awaiting him would look for his return with greater worry. Only a short time might pass before a new camp, considerably distant from the previous one, would have to be sought.

With these brief comments, the advantages of freedom of settlement for independent individual families, in contrast to a longer residence of many people in the same place, become convincing. It is true, however, and this should be mentioned at the outset, that many families gather around a stranded whale and thus form a fortuitous settlement of limited duration. This exists, however, only as long as the supply of meat and fat holds out, for even a sea monster of such giant proportions as these largest mammals does not by any means supply unlimited quantities of food. This isolated occasion, besides one or two others of the same nature, proves how unsuitable fixed settlements would be as a permanent arrangement for our natives. It is to the advantage of all that their extensive homeland has few people, so that each individual family has a wide area open to it in all directions where its members can devote themselves undisturbed to food-gathering.

342 361 Hence, the dwelling of the Yamana, in form as well as in construction and location, is a thing of chance. A person on a journey undoubtedly aims for a definite goal at which to land if the weather is good, but sometimes he does not attain it because good booty crosses his path along the way, because he is driven off his course in the pursuit of an animal, or because wind and waves are against him. After all,

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361 given to quiet bays and a coastline made safe by islands lying in front of it. Here, too, however, no one escapes all the hardships of the fickle weather (29) because the huts themselves are only frail

> 29. In this connection Bove (e) :157 writes: "Their miserable huts are usually placed on the inner side of the little bays that cut deep into Tierra del Fuego. Even though these afford them some protection against the weather, it nevertheless happens that the poor occupants are half buried in snow the next morning or half drowned by rain."

structures. These statements will explain the phenomenon, surprising to some Europeans, that today throughout the entire Yamana region one finds traces of former campsites at every turn.

361 A family is no more independent in choosing the length of time they may stay in one place than it is in choosing a campsite. 494 Journeys overland are not undertaken, if only because it is not easy to drag the canoe along. On journeys by water, wind and weather determine the direction or make progress impossible. Sometimes /381/ these people cannot leave their camp for days because of the unremitting disturbances of nature, and they are then powerless to undertake anything even if they are tormented by hunger. If, as a result of threatening danger, they have been obliged to land quickly at a random spot, their lot may be only boggy clods of earth or water-soaked ground (30) which they can escape only when the weather

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> 30. Hyades (f) :557 observed: "The earth is so wet that often water runs off if one merely exerts a little pressure on the ground, and the natives are sometimes forced to make a ditch across the middle of the hut for drainage" /translated from French/.

grows calm. Thus, the restlessness of their nomadic life is very often linked with danger and considerable renunciation or even the abandonment of the most modest demands of human well-being. The stable dwelling, however, erected for a sojourn of several days at a suitable place that has been freely chosen, does offer some minor conveniences.

/438 cont./ 1. The Bark Canoe

484 505 On land our Yamana do not undertake long marches, but content themselves with the walking necessary to gather wood or shells and to get game. Their territory is not suitable for land journeys. Without exception, they travel from one island to another, from one shore to another, in their bark canoe. Even though they /439/ could go a long distance along the beach, they prefer to travel by water which is easier and more comfortable. The canoe is absolutely indispensable for them. In case an individual family or small group have lost this vessel, they find themselves in a state of emergency which they must remedy, the sooner the better and absolutely imperatively. As water nomads they could not, under any circumstances, forego this method of transportation for any length of time (120).

120. The indispensable importance of the canoe for our natives has been variously stressed. Spegazzini (a): 161 calls it "the object of greatest importance" /translated from Spanish/ and Dabbene (b):180 "an object of prime necessity for the Yahgan" /translated from Spanish/. Other opinions are of a similar nature.

501 The method of canoe construction is somewhat peculiar and differs at first glance from the boats of other peoples. The products of the country, which in themselves are meager, are chosen with intelligent circumspection and used, each in its way, to turn out a resistant and durable vessel. As a whole it looks graceful, its form is pleasing. In its details it shows taste, and its lines are agreeable.

Regardless of many minor details, it strikes everyone who judges it as a masterpiece of efficiency and a supreme achievement of the technical ability of these Indians (121). Everyone is not

121. Luschan:8 came to the following conviction: "In comparison with [the skiff-like

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Hyades (q):305 collected and wrote down many terms.

γ. Its Accessories

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The Fuegian family spends more than half the days of the year and most of the hours of a day in the canoe. Since they travel restlessly from one camping place to another, they always take all their /Fig. 28 appears here/ belongings, little though

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Fig. 28. Leather Hand Protector.
Two-thirds natural size.

that is. For the man his weapons are indispensable, and the *woman must always have a few little things handy. We shall not* speak of all these things here, but rather, only those that are indispensable adjuncts to an ánan (137).

137. Lothrop (b):145 says: "When fully equipped, the Yahgan canoe carried the following articles: two or more paddles, three kinds of baskets, two fire-tongs, four spears (fish, seal, crab, and limpet), dip-net, club, grass mooring rope or thong, bark bucket, fish-line" /cited in English/.

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only two persons were saved" /translated from French/.

to this day by the Yamana; the reports of missionaries and European travelers also refer to them. In Hyades (q):362 we read: "Shipwrecks of canoes are very frequent and annually cause a high mortality. Mr. Bridges in his unpublished work cites many accidents of this kind: shipwreck of five canoes, 33 persons drowned; shipwreck of two canoes, 13 drowned..." /translated from French/. The accident is usually caused by overconfidence. These people are extremely reckless, and, as Bridges (l):15 expresses it "venturesome in trusting themselves with comparative strangeness" /cited in English/, which every observer verifies. In most recent times, however, unprincipled thoughtlessness [473] destroys many a life when Indians in a highly intoxicated state venture out on the treacherous waves although they do not have control of themselves.

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Supremely confident of their own ability, these people may even decide to take long journeys in their fragile vessel. As a rule, however, they stay within the narrow confines of their native district; every dialect group has one (p. 199 /untranslated/). Certain occasions, however, almost always the chase after the large urtine seal, tɛpɛ̃ʔa (Arctocephalus australis), and the pursuit of a sick, weary whale, make them forget, in their eagerness, how far behind they have left the coast. It has been proved that a few families visited Isla Ildefonso; others are supposed to have ventured as far as the Diego Ramírez Islands. They are [823] guided in their journeys by their exact knowledge of the locality and by an excellent gift of orientation.

[497] Soon after the opening of the mission station in Ushuaia individual canoes arrived from great distances, even some from the Halakwulup. For example, Bridges (l):15 mentions incidentally: "I know several natives of Cuchawulaf who come to Ushuaia in the East and in the opposite direction as far as Port Gallant and Mercury Sound; this distance is considerably over two /455/ hundred miles" /cited in English/. Our Fuegians can accomplish these astonishingly distant journeys because, wherever they land, they provide for their needs in life, namely, meat from the most diverse types of animals, wood for the indispensable fire, and pieces of fur to protect their bodies.

/1011 cont./
friendly neighbors, but is willingly offered to every fellow-tribesman.

Each of the many individual families is constantly traveling about not only under the pressure of the daily food quest, but also from a natural wanderlust (p. 363). They move slowly, but nevertheless cover long distances in the course of time. Definite boundaries separate the many local groups (p. 630) and the five dialect groups (p. 199 /untranslated/) from one another. These boundaries may be crossed under certain circumstances, and no visitor from another region can be lawfully prevented from doing so by the local residents. In general every family stays within its narrower home area, if only because they do not like to meet strange groups. It is a universal characteristic of the Yamana to stay away from strangers in the first place or at least to avoid them; they feel constrained in the presence of strangers, and suspicion makes them almost ill (439).

439. Bridges (a):210 gives a reason for this which is not quite correct: "These people dare not go where they have no friends, and where they are unknown, as they would most likely be soon killed"/cited in English/. We have repeatedly mentioned that certain circumstances make it permissible for anyone to travel in the territory of another dialect group.

/1020/ The ceaseless travel of individual families who thus meet one another and whose travel routes intersect partly explains the remarkably good propagation of news, which works invisibly. Everything that happens and any event that is in any way noteworthy are circulated far and wide and with a speed that sometimes seemed inexplicable to me. This much is certain, the Yamana lack such means of communication as loud calls or drumbeats. I cannot reliably state whether or not they give each other digital signs within a visible range, but I infer this from careful observations. Every adult learns what has happened within the confines of a wide area and usually without much delay. Most news, of course, is communicated from mouth to mouth. The facts are inevitably altered

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262 824 [821] and let the others share them, instead of selfishly enjoying them alone. People from another region who land on strange territory and find large quantities of amáim may neither pick them nor eat them. If they do, they must be prepared for threatening weather when they continue their journey. Their taking the berries would portend ánačiwa, ruin and destruction for them.

262 824 821 The "rain berry," palaxáačis, Rubus geoides (p.279), may be eaten only in fair weather. If someone has discovered a spot where there are great numbers of these berries and he wants to gather them, he must first obtain permission from the táuina who has the right to distribute them to adults and children. A person who picks the palaxáačix without such permission or in /1309/ rainy weather must be prepared for a sudden heavy storm with rain on the open sea, which will endanger his life, as atonement, hánečí, for his disobedience. On March 16, 1923, there was an unusually heavy cloudburst with floods. Two days earlier a few girls had stolen off to a place that was well known for its many palaxáačix -- it is about an hour's distance from Punta Remolino -- and picked these berries. In all seriousness Nelly told me on the evening of March 16th that the young Halakwulup, Julia, had gone to this place with a few other girls. Julia was unfamiliar with the taboo, and she had picked and eaten many of the berries. The other girls followed her example. The heavy rain was a punishment for this.

262 It is not at all seldom that sudden bad weather breaks out over the wide inlets open to the south. In this region it is customary not to eat certain game animals that have been caught on the same day, but to keep them until the following day. A person who does not conform to this must be prepared for a heavy loss in the immediate future. This custom is probably meant to teach people to provide for the next day, for all too often a family is unable to travel because of unfavorable natural forces, and they could suffer great hardship if they had not learned and were not compelled to economize with their already meager supply.

264 821 484 The Yamana very seldom eat during a canoe trip and, if they do, always very little. Anyone who eats may not throw food remains and refuse overboard, but should destroy them in the fire which is always kept burning. It is said that Yoáiox decreed this.

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264 When one fails to observe this rule, his child will scream just as
821 incessantly as did the child of Yoflox (p. 1140). Moreover,
484 other people say that his canoe will run into bad weather.
Spencer:87 writes: "When crossing one of the Sounds, a man will paint broad transverse bands of black across the woman's face. This is supposed to ensure a fairweather crossing" /cited in English/. I did not learn anything about this from my informants, but I did hear that bad weather will set in immediately if someone pulls out tall reeds in a lagoon.

823 Moreover, the Yamana are still imprisoned in a realm of superstitious notions about so-called baleful places. These are first of all the places that the Lakúma like to inhabit. No one should venture there in his canoe or gather mussels there. Besides the Lakúma and the malevolent Haučélla, certain animals who are in contact with the yékamuš make a place dangerous for human beings. Friendly, well-meaning yékamuš warn people about these places, for they know from their dreams what the situation is and the danger a person can get into on that account. A person who unwittingly enters such a zone suddenly feels unwell; he becomes utterly weak and immediately falls asleep. /1310/ He is lost if a yékamuš is not called in time to free him from the pernicious influence of this baleful place. On March 21, 1923, Whaits told the following story. "In Lapatáia there is a fatal spot where even the fish are not spared. Once several men had set a net there. It was quickly filled with fish and the men began hauling it in. When they were near the shore with the heavy net, a strong force pulled out all the fish and the men stared astonished at the empty net." Earlier Bridges reported: "A certain Sisaniaŋjis had made up his mind to settle out at a beautiful place some three miles from Ushuaia. Accordingly he went there with his wife and family, and one or two friends. These built a wigwam and had plenty of wood and water close at hand. But late in the afternoon they heard a strange voice or cry, whether from owl, hawk, bird, beast, or evil spirit they knew not and were too much frightened to go and ascertain, saying sapiccoosh, sapiccoosh, which means bloody arrow head. They forthwith packed up and hastened back to Ushuaia from the fatal spot" /cited in English/ (MM:XIII, 80; 1879).

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

FISH-NET

227 At certain seasons of the year Beagle channel is infested by small sardine-like fish which the Yahgan captured in dip-nets (*chinumáisk*) woven of grass. A rather poorly-made example of these is shown in fig. 89. It will be noted that there is a light wooden frame enclosed by parallel stems of grass tied to the members of the frame. This was lashed to the end of a pole and with it the fish were dipped out. A model of this implement appears in the bow of the canoe in fig. 73.

FIG. 89.—Yahgan dip-net. Height, 12 in. (14/2321)

FISH-WEIRS

According to Hyades (1891, p. 372) the Yahgan *sometimes erected* in suitable places fish-weirs consisting of a row of stakes. Of these I saw no trace in Tierra del Fuego.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

594 484 Yahgan society was based on the family. There was no higher unit. However, related families usually paddled their canoes in couples, as the skin housetop was heavy for a single canoe, and they divided the common roof into two parts, of which each carried one. While the Yahgan were rovers, they usually stayed regularly in one district, where most of the people were their relatives.

622 554 All observers of the Yahgan comment on their lack of leadership. Medicine-men asserted a certain authority through the fear they inspired, but at times they were roughly handled, so their power was in no wise secure. As no communal enterprises were undertaken, there existed no need for chiefs.